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57/07/20 No Special Favors

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No Special Favors

Press 7-20-57

It is surprising to find Governor O'Neill falling for a magazine promotion lie detector test for Dr. Sam Sheppard.

Governor O'Neill must have known that Sheppard refused to take a lie detector test before his trial and conviction by a Cuyahoga County jury. He made no effort to take the test during his numerous appeals to higher courts.

If the governor did not know, he should have been told that the lie detector move had been engineered largely by the so-called Court of Last Resort. This is an Argosy magazine promotion that has meddled in several sensational criminal cases throughout the country.

In spite of its impressive sounding name, the Court of Last Resort has no legal standing.

Of course the request came from the lieutenant governor of Ohio, Paul Herbert, which brings in another angle. It was not in his official capacity, however, that Herbert acted. It was as co-counsel for the convicted wife killer who is serving a life term in the Ohio Penitentiary.

Herbert should have told the governor that this court and Erle Stanley Gardner, mystery writer and Argosy author, had currently been conducting lie tests in connection with the stories told by a Florida convict.

These vague stories suggesting implication in the Sheppard murder are not taken seriously by city and county officials familiar with the case. The stories are shot through with contradictions and inconsistencies. Not even the Argosy outfit claims that lie detector tests given the convict, Joseph Wedler, are conclusive.

There is no good reason for granting Sam Sheppard extraordinary privileges at the Ohio Penitentiary, even if his co-counsel is the lieutenant governor of the state.

If Sheppard gets a lie detector test every other prisoner in the Ohio Penitentiary who asks for it should get one too.

The tests, of course, should be by regular law enforcement officials familiar with the work. Any test by an outsider is decidedly out of place.